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News From Chuck Lesnick

July 10, 2008

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At my suggestion, the Landmarks Board last week implemented an executive order by Mayor Amicone that called for the Building Commissioner to notify the Landmarks Board whenever someone applies for a demolition permit in Yonkers on a property 75 years or older.

The purpose of the Demolition Review Order is to keep Yonkers historical properties intact as Yonkers continues to grow and prosper.

After receiving the application, the Landmarks Board will review the property according to a number of established criteria to make an immediate determination on whether or not the property has historical significance. If a house is merely old and not historic, no action will be taken.

If it is, however, a true gem of a historical property, then a 180-day moratorium on demolition will be put in place. During this time, the Landmarks Board will work to create a landmarking application, hold public hearings, seek advice from the planning board, among other things before making a final determination as to whether to recommend it to the City Council for landmarking.

This Executive Order and the actions of the Landmarks Board does not change the existing law or procedure for landmarking. It is only expected to apply to a dozen potential historic properties per year where demolition permits are requested.

The demolition review order is a result of legislation that I proposed last year to save our true historic homes and buildings while we allow redevelopment of others and build for the future.

I'm glad the Mayor and the Landmarks Board have established a mechanism to determine which properties are truly historic and which are simply just old and have no historical impact on Yonkers future.

Seeing is Believing



Exciting initiatives are being planned on Alexander Street along the Hudson River between the Yonkers and Glenwood Metro-North Stations.

After reviewing the initial Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS), the Community Development Agency (CDA), of

which I am Vice-Chair, has requested that the Environmental Simulation Center (ESC) create a computer simulated model to show what the various Alexander Street proposals on the waterfront would look like.

The presentation will be unveiled at the next CDA meeting at 4 p.m. on July 23 here at City Hall on the 4th floor.

The meeting will also be televised on Channel 78 for those of you who can't make the meeting. I encourage everyone to watch to get an accurate picture of what the downtown could look like.

Important Real Estate Committee Meeting 7/10

The Real Estate Committee will meet at 5 p.m. this Thursday, July 10 at City Hall on the 4th floor in the Council Chambers to review the status of the Milio Projects along Ashburton Avenue, at School 6 and at Longfellow School. The Committee will also introduce the consulting firm of Malcolm Pirnie who will assist the Council as they assume the role of lead agency in the Avalon Bay project north of Austin Avenue.

After 6 p.m. the Committee will hopefully complete a series of briefings and discussions with its environmental consultants (AKRF) concerning the issues presented in the DEIS for the SFC project.

Attention Seniors: Consumer Awareness Seminar



At my request, Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's Office will meet with Yonkers senior citizens from 1-3 p.m. Thursday, July 10 at the Nepperhan Community Center, 342 Warburton Ave., Yonkers to discuss consumer awareness issues surrounding health care.

Visiting us will be Senior Consumer Fraud Representative John Katzenstein whose presentation will include information on identity theft among other topics. We will try to address any relevant questions or concerns you may have.

This event is the latest installment of the Attorney General's statewide Consumer Awareness Initiative, designed to equip consumers with the information they need to protect themselves.

We look forward to seeing you there. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact my office at 377-6060.

Farmer Lesnick is Back!



After buying your plantains, greens, fresh strawberries, and ornamental jewelry from various booths at the St. John's Getty Square Farmer's Market, you can then satisfy your civic taste buds by stopping by my constituent booth to discuss "anything Yonkers."

How will the downtown SFC project affect traffic? Can we find a way to better fund arts and music education in Yonkers public schools? What if your landlord wants you out by the end of the month but your lease doesn't expire for

a year?

Whatever it is, my staff and I will try to give you organic, fresh, and locally grown advice and answer during market hours every Thursday from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. until November when the market closes.

Singing Yonkers Praises

When Yonkers Partners in Education (YPiE) sponsored a bookfair at Barnes & Noble on June 20, during which 25 % of the store's proceeds went to purchase books for the Yonkers Public Schools Literacy Program, Instrumental Music Director of Schools 26 and 29 Joseph S. Lento was just as thrilled as anyone for this was the first time both school groups had played together-- and they were terrific.



"By the time I arrived at the store, all the seats were taken," said YPiE's office manager, Kristine E. Crotty. "But when the music started, I was glad to be standing because you just had to move to that music. Like others there, I was amazed to learn that this was the first time they played together."

Still, the music had another effect on listeners. That night Barnes & Noble sold close to

\$5,000 worth of books! What's more, the students dedicated their time to the event which didn't even benefit their instrumental music program.

"Their enthusiasm and commitment to the Yonkers Public Schools is all that mattered," said Lento, who asked for each to be recognized by name.

Drum roll, please. Let's hear it for Westchester Hills School 29's Samantha Vicenz, Christopher Palmieri, Andrew Matias, Joseph Grippo, Fatima Ciss, Sharon Samuels, Taylor Walls, Tamika Grandy, Selene Clarke, and Edward Sangchin. And from Casamir Pulaski School 26, thank you to Eric Mfundo, Marc Suarez, Zane Shatz, Alexis Newman, Jake Kowaleski, Michael Muollo, and Michael Fracatti.

BRAVO!

(Photo does not reflect all students in order.)

They Did



As City Council President, I oversee the Office of the City Clerk who issues marriage licenses but I wound up going out of state and on the high seas to officiate at my first marriage.

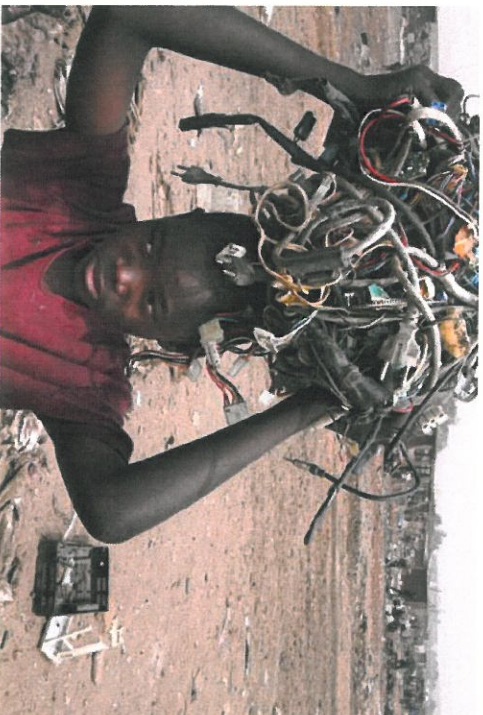
When my high school and college buddy asked if I would perform his marriage ceremony in June, I promised to look into it and was pleased to learn that out-of-state elected officials can be solemnized as a Justice of the Peace in Massachusetts (as well as Michigan and California and yes, in Yonkers as well.)

With the power vested in me by the wedding of Dan Shepard and Britta Koehler aboard a 40-foot schooner in Gloucester near where they first met, walking their dogs at Good Harbor Beach.

It was a gorgeous June day with sunny skies and blue waters. The couple wrote their vows on scrolls and bottled them for release in the Atlantic Ocean at the exact address of the wedding, its latitude and longitude: 42°36.972' N 70° 37.659' W.

P.S- Dan. Play those numbers!

High Tech Trash



According to the UN Environment Programme, about 25 million TVs are taken out of service yearly. And in the fashion-conscious mobile market, 98 million U.S. cell phones took their last call in 2005. All told, the EPA estimates that in the U.S. that year, between 1.5 and 1.9 million tons of computers, TVs, VCRs, monitors, cell phones, and other equipment were discarded. If all sources of electronic waste are tallied, it could total 50 million tons a year worldwide.

In response to this global crises, as well as to a call by the Green Policy Task Force, I am pleased to announce that Yonkers is holding its first ever e-recycling day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on July 19 at the Chicken Island parking lot.

I urge everyone to gather their electronic waste to take advantage of this offering to recycle responsibly. It is not only everyone's civic duty, but, some would argue, a moral obligation.

Arguments aside, the fact is your improperly discarded TV could not only end up in a ditch in West Africa, it could also lead to untimely deaths.

Read this excerpt from a recent National Geographic article to get the clear picture.

"Israel Mensah, an incongruously stylish young man of about 20, adjusts his designer glasses and explains how he makes his living. Each day scrap sellers bring loads of old electronics- from where he doesn't know. Mensah and his partners-friends and family, including two shoeless boys raptly listening to us talk-buy a few computers or TVs. They break copper yokes off picture tubes, littering the ground with shards containing lead, a neurotoxin, and cadmium, a carcinogen that damages lungs and kidneys. They strip resalable parts such as drives and memory chips. Then they rip out wiring and burn the plastic. He sells copper

stripped from one scrap load to buy another. The key to making money is speed, not safety. "The gas goes to your nose and you feel something in your head," Mensah says, knocking his fist against the back of his skull for effect. "Then you get sick in your head and your chest." Nearby, hulls of broken monitors float in the lagoon. Tomorrow the rain will wash them into the ocean. "

Click [here](#) for the complete article on e- waste.

You can also [click here](#) to learn more about the Green Policy Task Force and all it is doing to better improve Yonkers.

Photograph by Peter Essick

Seniors Volunteer in Yonkers



It used to be that an apple a day kept the doctor away.

Now new evidence is in: Watch your diet. Exercise

regularly. And volunteer your time to help others.

It's true. Volunteering makes you healthier. And happier.

Researchers have attempted to measure the benefits that volunteers receive, including the positive feeling referred to as "helper's high."

Whether hammering nails to create a new home for a needy family or raising funds for a cause such as Yonkers Relay For Life, volunteer work helps people put their own lives in

perspective and makes us appreciate all that we have.

But the medically proven health benefits of volunteering are perhaps even more relevant as Baby Boomers--the generation of 77 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964--reach the age typically associated with retirement.

Recent medical and scientific documentation supports that seniors who volunteer at least one hour a week experience a heightened sense of well-being. It improves insomnia, strengthens the immune system, and speeds up surgery recovery time.

Volunteering can also improve self-esteem, reduce heart rates and blood pressure, increase endorphin production, enhance immune systems, lessen stress, and combat social isolation. This is so important, especially for older adults, who are combating isolation and stress associated with a change in lifestyle such as retirement.

To meet Yonkers seniors who enjoy the benefits of volunteer work, tune into Channel 78 to catch my latest "Spotlight on Yonkers" show where we feature meet Anna Alterman and Len Cacciatore talking about their work as literacy mentors through the [Jewish Council of Yonkers](#) with a program coordinator, Randee Ginsberg. They are joined by Cathy Elser from [55 Plus](#) and Vernon Brinkley from [Groundwork Yonkers](#) with three of his senior volunteers Leon and Dorothy Wyka and Ullabritta McCarthy.

The show is airing all this week at the following times: 9 am, 1pm, 5 pm, and 10 pm.

Photo: I to r: me, Cathy Elser, Randee Ginsberg, Len Cacciatore and Anna Alterman.



Photo: me, Vernon Brinkley, Leon and Dorothy Wyka and Ullabritta McCarthy.

Meet Yonkers First Astronaut



Roosevelt High School Class of '79 graduate Colonel Ronald J. Garan, Jr. was one of seven astronauts on board the Space Shuttle Discovery for a 14 day mission to the International Space Station in June 2008.

Now back on Earth, meet Col. Garan to discover more about his adventures in outer space and see the exhibition "Space Is the Place" at the [Hudson River Museum](#) in Yonkers on Monday, July 14 at 7 pm.

Don't miss this unique opportunity!

7 pm: Col. Garan makes a presentation to the City of Yonkers.

7:30 pm Video presentation by Col. Garan of recent space mission.

~ Reception to follow ~

For more information, call 963-4550.

Jazz on Pier

The Yonkers

Downtown/Waterfront

Business Improvement District - in partnership with the City of Yonkers- will again present the weekly "Jazz and Blues at Dusk" Summer Concert Series at the Yonkers Waterfront amphitheater. Introduced last year, the concert series-free of charge to the public-provides musical entertainment by some of the New York metropolitan area's top jazz and blues artists. Sponsored by Con Edison and Nationwide Insurance/Alpha Direct, the Friday night concerts will be staged from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, July 11 through September 8.

Here's the line up:

July 11: Roxy Perry, known as the "New York Blues Queen," recently received the 2007 Artist of the Year Award from the Westchester Arts Council. She has performed nationally, has produced three CD's and has received rave reviews for her original songwriting and vocals. She was born and still resides in New Rochelle.

July 18: Mala Waldron, a jazz/soul vocalist pianist, and songwriter. She has been performing since age 15 and has produced three CDs. Her most recent CD, Always There, was placed among the "Top 20 Jazz CDs of 2006" by JazzUSA. Based in New York City, she has performed in Japan, France, Belgium, and most recently China, Taiwan, and Malaysia.

July 25: Funkasaurus Rex, a nine-piece band based Yonkers, combines rhythm 'n blues and jazz with well-known NYC players. Their CD, Etched in Stone, was released this year. "Real funky music ain't extinct yet."

August 1: The Element Band, a nine-piece, multi-cultural band playing Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, Jamaican, Funk, Dance and Jazz music. Founded in 2003 by world-class performer Charlie Lagond, The Element Band has toured both locally and internationally, playing venues such as BB Kings, The Knitting Factory and Swing 46. The Element Band released its third CD, Future Proof in 2007.

August 8: DeForest Raphael & Friends. DeForest Raphael "loves singing songs about love." Primarily a balladeer, he has been singing since junior high school in Detroit, Michigan. He sings in all genres from classical to jazz at local clubs in Westchester and New York City and at venues throughout the country. He lives and works in Yonkers.

August 15: Antoinette Montague, a jazz & blues singer from Fairfield, CT, regularly performs with her quartet at famous New York City venues. She was in the Great Women in Music Festival at Birdland with the Duke Ellington and selected to perform at the 10th Anniversary of International Women in Jazz. She emanates energy, joy and fun on and off the stage.

August 22: Joan Crowe, a versatile jazz, standards pop, rock, blues, and folk singer originally of Indianapolis. Along with her jazz trio, she has performed at the Rainbow Room, the Carnegie Club and Brunelli's, among other New York City and Westchester venues. She is also a well- renowned comedian and earned the 2002 Manhattan Association of Cabaret and Clubs award for Female Music Comedy.

August 29: Vanessa Falabella, a Brazil native whose sound is classic yet a contemporary mix of pop, Brazil, jazz, and R & B. She is influenced by Brazilian and American music and sings in both English and Portuguese. Currently promoting her CD VIBE, she has performed at many New York City venues, including The Knitting Factory, Town Hall, and The Supper Club.

September 5: The Blues Experience, a five- piece blues band that was last year's winner of the 2006 International Blues Challenge. Based in Long Island, the band has played countless venues throughout the New York metro area.

Blow Out Tag Sale



The Exchange Club's annual indoor tag sale will be held from 10 am to 6 pm on Saturday August 9th at the Ramada Hotel on 125 Tuckahoe Road, Yonkers.

Featured will be new and gently worn clothing for all ages, from child to adult; toys; books; gift items; jewelry; furniture and much, much more!

The Exchange Club is a national service organization that raises funds for community projects most notably in child abuse prevention.

Donations are being accepted starting today. To arrange for a pick up, please call 914- 879-8692 or 917-295-6411.

Friday Field Trip

Groundwork

Yonkers is sponsoring a field trip to the New York

Science Barge

on July 11th leaving from the Chicken Island at 1 p.m. in hopes of bringing it to Yonkers. All are welcome to call 375-2151 for more information.



The Science Barge is a prototype, sustainable urban farm and environmental education center. It is the only fully functioning demonstration of renewable energy supporting sustainable food production in New York City. The Science Barge grows tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce with zero net carbon emissions, zero chemical pesticides, and zero runoff.

From May to October 2007, the Science Barge hosted more than 3,000 schoolchildren from all five New York boroughs as well as surrounding counties as part of our environmental education program. In addition, more than 6,000 adult visitors visited the facility along with press from around the world.



Written by Laura Fahrenthold

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[Forward the update!](#)